

SWEDEN – KALMAR

Promoting local food, “Taste delights” food experience fair

The example describes an example of activities with a potential to strengthen the linkages between agriculture and the wider rural economy by providing increased possibilities of use of agriculture production, enhancing the added value of the area, providing new job opportunities and demonstrating ways of diversifying rural business.

1. Project details

Nature of the project

Purpose: “Taste Delights” is the biggest Nordic event for small scale artisan food production. The event is a physical exhibition of the award winning ‘food producers road map’ printed in 2006, that contains over 900 artisan food producers from all over Sweden, located mainly in rural areas. Each Swedish region presents its local specialities and the producers are the main protagonists. The fair also provides the possibility for the regions to advertise their tourist attractions, focusing on local food production.

Content: The fair is dedicated specifically to artisanal food producers. Preparation, competence development and follow up activities are carried out at regional level. In each region sub-projects are undertaken with the aim of preparing the participants in order for them to make the most of their presence in Stockholm.

Inspiration: A similar project was organised at regional level, coordinated by the Farmers Union and since the project was successful the same idea has been replicated at national level.

Policy coherence: The project is connected to the national as well as regional and local level development strategies. The project aims at developing existing and new micro enterprises and new job opportunities in rural areas, which is a specific objective of the Rural Development Programme (RDP).

Links between agriculture and the rest of the economy

The main agriculture sub-sector involved is foremost small scale artisanal food production and to some extent local, catering, hotels and restaurants. The backward linkages are to primary agriculture production, dairy and meat, vegetables, fruit. Forward linkages are to the experience based tourist sub-sector, restaurants, hotels and catering for the national market.

Scale of the project

Size: In the national fair in 2009, 350 small scale artisanal food producers participated with thousands of products. From the Kalmar region about 50 producers participated. The fair has more than 100,000 visitors and it was arranged for the second time in 2009.

Time scale: The fair was arranged for the first time in august 2007 and for the second time in 2009.

Coverage: The project is divided in two parts, a national part culminating with the fair in Stockholm every two year in August and a regional part for each County or region in Sweden to prepare and follow up the regional enterprises participation in the fair in Stockholm. Food producers from Kalmar County participate in cooperation with producers from Öland and Blekinge County, located on the south east coast of Sweden

Beneficiaries and supporters

Beneficiary: The project is promoted by the national centre for small scale artisanal food production "Eldrimner". The centre also manages the project at the national level and is responsible for organising the fair in Stockholm and co-ordinating all related activities. In each region activities are carried out to prepare the producers and organise the follow up actions throughout the year. The Farmers Union South East realise and coordinate the project.

Supporters: The project is supported by the regional and local authorities. The restaurants in Stockholm have been supportive to the project by acting as ambassadors for their rural region.

Finance

Funding: The funding at regional level is mainly through the RDP administrated by Kalmar, Jönköping and Blekinge Counties and regional public funding by the County administrations.

For 2009 the Budget for the region of Kalmar County (together with Jönköping and Blekinge County) was:

- RDP, axis 3, Micro enterprises: about 120,000 EUR (1,224,000 SEK)
- Regional public Financing: about 80,000 EUR (800,000 SEK)
- Private funding (participants): 20,000 EUR (210,000 SEK)

Results

Direct results: 60 producers from the region Kalmar, Jönköping and Blekinge co-operated in the participation in the fair in Stockholm in 2009. The fair had 100,000 visitors. The long term objective is to establish new business relations between rural artisanal food producers and a wider market in the capital of Sweden and to improve the relation between producers and costumers as well as with other producers in other regions. The results have been positive. At least two new companies have been established and new business relations, the number of visitors exceeded the expectations. Kalmar won 5 awards at the Swedish National Championship in artisanal food production arranged at the fair.

Main target: Small scale rural enterprises, artisan food production, farmers-primary production and farmers-diversified into small scale artisanal food production.

Wider benefits: The attraction of the region is also boosted by the fair which should benefit the rural economy as whole through, for example hotels and event based companies.

2. Relevance of case study experiences for others

Problems: Problems are mostly related to getting the regional funding in place, since the target group is mainly micro enterprises which do not have their own financial means to participate to the fair in Stockholm. A more sustainable way to organise financing needs to be found. Coordinating the participation regionally and carrying out the preparation is very time consuming and requires significant financial resources.

Transferability and mainstreaming potential: The project is transferable to other business sectors and regions in Europe. The idea to 'invade' urban areas, with quality products produced mainly in rural areas based on rural resources, raw material and knowledge has proven to be successful.

Innovation: The activities had not been carried out on this scale before, with this amount of producers, products and visitors and prepared and followed up in all regions throughout rural Sweden.

Institutional aspects: The national part of the project is co-ordinated by the national centre for small scale artisanal food "Eldrimner" and the regional projects have different partnerships in different regions. In Kalmar, the project group consists of representatives from the Farmers Union, Rural Economy and Agriculture Society, The association Öland's Harvest Fair and "Smart Eating" Kalmar. The partnership would be strengthened by also involving other business sectors such as tourism.

Social aspects: The project has contributed to the creation of more job opportunities in the region by the companies established as a result of the project.

Environmental aspects: No specific environmental aspects are involved, but, for example transportation of products from the regions to Stockholm has been coordinated to decrease negative impact on environment. Small scale food production is in-the-main sustainable in its choice of raw material and methods of production.

Sustainability: It is a problem for the project to stand on its own without receiving funding. The main target group, micro enterprises, are too small to be able to finance the activities or to organise the overall coordination. Overall coordination is required if the fair continues to be carried out in this scale in the future.

Lessons to pass on: The main lesson is the importance of a careful preparation and competent 'development coaching' of the producers throughout the year; they need to be prepared on how to present themselves and their products, on how to take care of the logistics and the packaging of products. Another important lesson is to agree on a common profile in order to make as big an impact as possible over the three days of the fair, to invite possible customers from trade and restaurant sector, to ask politicians and other actors from the region to invite important people to the fair and to cooperate with as many stakeholders as possible from their own region.